

WELCOMING FRENCH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as we begin this evening, I want to begin in my service as co-chair of the French Caucus to welcome Emmanuel Macron, President of France, to Washington.

South Carolina is especially appreciative of France, with our shared heritage, particularly as we are very grateful for the Marquis de Lafayette, who was so vital in the American Revolution and who actually began his service landing in Georgetown, South Carolina.

It is very significant. I have colleagues from South Carolina, North Carolina, and even Florida. We are very grateful to point out that, here in the House Chamber, is an indication of the affection the American people have for France.

There are only two portraits here in the House Chamber: President George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette. So it is quite revealing that, indeed, there is great love and affection for America's first ally, and how exciting it is that he has arrived here in Washington. We are looking forward to the joint session as he speaks to Congress and the American people tomorrow morning.

TAX REFORM

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Last year, House Republicans made history by passing the first meaningful tax cuts in 32 years. The last time our Tax Code was updated, "Top Gun" was the top movie, "The Oprah Winfrey Show" first aired across the Nation, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average ended the year at 1,895.

For context, today, the Dow Jones Industrial Average is over 24,000 points, which is an increase of nearly 8,000 points, which is a nearly 20 percent increase since the day that President Donald Trump was elected. From that day, the stock market has had a remarkable increase because of faith in his business ability, his acumen, and, I believe, the success that Republicans would have to cut taxes, cut regulations, and create jobs.

Despite how much our economy has changed, we were still operating on a tax structure designed in 1986. But last year, House and Senate Republicans came together, inspired by President Donald Trump, to make the Tax Code more fair, more simple, and less burdensome for the middle class, which then, of course, yields to the increase in the stock market, which benefits all Americans.

I am grateful that families all across America today are already seeing the direct benefits of the Tax Cuts and

Jobs Act, with the leadership of our chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, KEVIN BRADY; the extraordinary service of Speaker PAUL RYAN; our leader, KEVIN MCCARTHY; our Conference chair, CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS; and also our secretary of the Conference, VIRGINIA FOXX of North Carolina.

The jobs have been created in such a remarkable way that African-American unemployment is at the lowest level since the Bureau of Labor Statistics started tracking it in 1972. Hispanic unemployment is the lowest it has ever been recorded. The level of unemployment for American women is at the lowest rate in over 20 years. It was reported today that 14 States also have record-low unemployment due to new jobs by reducing regulations and taxes, a positive agenda.

We are here to highlight stories from across North Carolina and South Carolina of everyday families and small-business owners getting to keep more of their own hard-earned income.

I will first yield to my good friend Congressman RALPH NORMAN, who represents the Fifth District of South Carolina. Congressman NORMAN was just elected in a special election last year, but already he has been here to make a difference on behalf of the people of South Carolina and the United States. With his background as a real estate developer, he and his wife, Elaine, have proven how to create jobs.

Congressman RALPH NORMAN.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell you that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is working. It is working in South Carolina's Fifth Congressional District, and it is working across the country. It is working for individuals and families who are seeing more money in their paychecks each month, and it is working for the companies that are investing the savings from tax reform into their employees.

Over the past few weeks, I have spoken with and visited the businesses of South Carolina that are putting these savings right back into the local communities. Early this month, LPL Financial announced that they will be investing these savings into their employees by increasing its 401(k) match to 75 percent and reducing the time for new hires to qualify for this match by 6 months.

As Congressman WILSON said, this personally touches 2,000 constituents in the Fifth District of South Carolina. That is 2,000 more families that now have a greater opportunity to save and see the light of a brighter future ahead.

Mr. Speaker, just today, I visited a UPS store in Gaffney, South Carolina. Because of tax reform, UPS has announced over \$12 billion in investments and an increase in pension funding.

During my UPS visit, I put on a uniform and assisted a delivery driver during a ride-along. I heard directly from the hardworking employees about how this news will impact them and all of their loved ones.

I don't think I speak just for myself when I say that we want jobs to come and stay in America. We want businesses to expand and to hire people in our communities. By reducing tax rates and simplifying the Tax Code, we are allowing companies to make these investments in their employees, in their communities, and in growing their businesses.

I look forward to continued opportunities to learn, see, and talk about the success of this tax reform. We promised fairer taxes, higher wages, and more jobs. As Congressman WILSON says, we have delivered.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his citation about UPS. I have had the same honor to put on the brown uniform to deliver packages. I found out something: the UPS employees—also FedEx, DHL, and others—are remarkable people delivering American-made products to the American people. What wonderful companies these are, and what wonderful employees they are.

Now I would like to go over some of the specific positive changes to our Tax Code that occurred under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

An average middle class family in South Carolina will save \$2,311 thanks to the tax cuts.

The child tax credit was doubled. I want to give a lot of credit because the reason it was doubled was the great work of our U.S. Senator TIM SCOTT, working with Ivanka Trump Kushner. This was their effort to work to make this child friendly, family friendly, looking out particularly for persons who are single-parent households. The child tax credit was doubled, from \$1,000 to \$2,000, making it easier for single mothers and new families to provide for their children.

The bill also removed the mandate that required you to buy healthcare or pay a penalty. So now people aren't penalized by the government for not being able to afford healthcare and health insurance.

The standard deduction doubled to \$24,000 for married couples filing jointly. This makes it simpler for couples to file their taxes because they will use the standard deduction and won't have to itemize their return.

Corporations that employ people create jobs. Their tax cuts dropped from 35 percent to 21 percent. Time and time again, I have heard from businessowners who plan to use their extra income to reinvest in the company, create jobs, provide bonuses, and raise wages. When taxes are low, businesses thrive and jobs are created in the Reagan tradition.

I am grateful for the leadership of Speaker PAUL RYAN, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman BRADY, and I appreciate the opportunity of working with them, in addition to President Donald Trump, for delivering meaningful tax relief to the American people. They deserve it.

Local success of the law was first heralded in the Second Congressional District of South Carolina, the central part of South Carolina, by Lou and Bill Kennedy of Nephron Pharmaceuticals in Cayce, announcing 125 new jobs and a 5 percent pay increase. They said that they made this decision as a direct result of the tax bill.

In fact, I am really grateful that Lou put together a barbecue where I was present with Governor Henry McMaster and Attorney General Alan Wilson. She made the announcement right there at the barbecue to the extraordinary employees of Nephron Pharmaceuticals. They may have been the first; they were certainly not the last. I was so grateful.

I was going through Walgreen's to pick up some pictures that I was having developed and I ran into Bill Mooneyhan. Bill is the president of the local Cayce-West Columbia Chamber of Commerce. He announced: Hey, Joe, because of the tax savings, our business, our auto repair shop, is going to add a new bay and create new jobs.

I said: Hey, Bill, because you announced this to me, you have just volunteered for a press conference, which I am really grateful that we were able to have with the National Federation of Independent Business, NFIB, led by Ben Homeyer in South Carolina.

□ 2015

NFIB is the largest small business organization in America, and it is bottom's up. The leadership really follows the directions of their local members. So all of us truly appreciate NFIB.

In February, I visited with Norman Dunagan, owner of Whiskey Alley restaurant and Dumpster Depot, which is a recycling facility in Aiken, South Carolina. I took this opportunity to congratulate him on his expansion resulting from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. He opened a third business last year due to the confidence in President Donald Trump and the House Republican leadership. All three of his small businesses are thriving and providing much-needed new jobs.

That day I also met with Clancy Cipkala, president and CEO of Solara Hospitality of West Columbia. Solara Hospitality is providing bonuses for their hotel hourly associates due to the tax cuts passed by the Republicans. In Orangeburg, South Carolina, South State Bank provided a \$1,000 bonus to their employees. In a rural area like Orangeburg, a \$1,000 bonus can make a huge difference for families. It can provide an opportunity for families to buy extra school supplies, pay down debt, make an investment in the future, start or add to an emergency fund, or take a much-needed family vacation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished congressman from North Carolina (Mr. PITTENGER), who represents the beautiful Ninth District of North Carolina, which includes substantially the extraordinary city of Charlotte, which is such a center for job creation of the Carolinas.

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership and for providing this opportunity tonight for us to highlight the significance and the importance of this tax bill for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, when I lived in Washington, D.C., in 1980, it came out of the malaise of an economy that wasn't growing. No jobs, no opportunity. And Ronald Reagan had a vision for a different America, and I worked hard on his campaign. He changed the whole structure of our Tax Code and reduced the regulations that moved this economy forward. Unprecedented growth in jobs. Eighteen million jobs came out of that economy.

And that is what this vision of President Trump and this Congress is about today. Who would have thought a year ago—just a year ago—that America would be experiencing what it is today: companies like Apple reinvesting \$350 billion; ExxonMobil, \$50 billion. You have unemployment that has plummeted to a 49-year low. U.S. manufacturing is expanding at the fastest rate in 14 years. Consumer confidence is at a 17-year high. Wages are up. Opportunities are up.

I had a gentleman come to me just this last week who owns two restaurants in Charlotte. He said: Thank you for your tax cut. I am now going to expand and build another restaurant out at the lake, and I can do that because I have got the capital to go reinvest.

You know, we have constrained this economy and the American people by these burdensome tax rates that are not competitive. Companies have been going to the rest of the world—Ireland, U.K., Germany—and leaving America because we weren't competitive with our Tax Code. Now they are coming back. Now companies in America are expanding.

You take just an individual. I had a lady at a gas station the other day. I was getting my gas, and she was pumping her gas. She looked at me, and she said: Are you Congressman PITTENGER? I said: Yes, ma'am. She said: Thank you. I am a single mom. I have got that little baby in the back seat, and what you have done for me is give me another \$150 a month, and I really can't tell you how much I appreciate what you are doing.

Eighty-two percent of American people are going to get a pay raise. They are getting it right now. And that is the difference. The proof is in the paycheck. Americans know that. Regardless of what the left says, the media says, or anyone else, the reality is jobs are expanding, paychecks are going up, people are getting bonuses.

In Charlotte alone, we have Bank of America giving out bonuses; we have Charlotte Pipe and Foundry, SteelFab, American Airlines, so many. Five hundred companies in this country have given out bonuses to their folks, and probably so many more we don't know about.

So I want to commend Chairman WILSON for his leadership. I thank him for making sure that the American people know what is yet to come. We have just scratched the surface on the opportunity and the growth and the jobs that will be there for the American people.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the points he makes of where people can look at their paycheck and see they are keeping more of their own money. This is not from the government. This is their own money. How important this is, and how it enables families to have a better life. And for the young people of our country, how positive this is. I thank the gentleman for reiterating that point.

The Business Roundtable, an association of America's largest employers, is reporting that tax reform has already produced wage increases, bonuses, increased matches for retirement savings, lower prices for consumers, investment in facilities, and tens of thousands of new American jobs as a direct result of tax reform.

As I indicated, we have the lowest unemployment among African Americans ever. We have the lowest unemployment among Hispanics since it has ever been determined. It is so exciting. Fourteen States have the lowest level of unemployment in recorded history. Among women, we have the lowest level of unemployment in 20 years. Everybody benefits from the tax cuts. This is so positive.

The Business Roundtable members alone have provided over \$545 million in bonuses to their employees, with bonuses, wage increases, and a range of other employee benefits to 1.6 million workers, along with \$1.2 billion in charitable contributions. According to the Tax Foundation, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will significantly lower marginal tax rates and the cost of capital, which would lead to a 1.7 percent increase in the gross domestic product over the long term, 1.5 percent higher wages, and an additional 339,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

They also say it will spur an additional \$1 trillion in Federal revenue from economic growth, with approximately \$600 billion coming from the bill's permanent provisions and approximately \$400 billion from the bill's temporary provisions over the budget window.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the congresswoman from the Fifth District of North Carolina (Ms. FOXX). Congresswoman FOXX is secretary of the Republican Conference, she is a remarkably determined former community college president, and she also is very much appreciated as the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce. Then she is particularly fortunate; she lives and has a beautiful home in Grandfather Mountain, North Carolina, some of the most beautiful mountains in the world of western North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman WILSON for leading the Special Order on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. I will agree with him; the Lord has blessed me with living in one of the most beautiful places in the world, the Fifth District of North Carolina. I am very, very grateful for it.

Last week, tax day was, for once, an occasion to celebrate because this was the last time Americans filed under the broken 32-year-old Tax Code. Next tax season, they will file under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act passed by this Congress last December.

Across the Fifth District of North Carolina, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has already relieved North Carolinians who are cashing bigger paychecks and benefiting from the country's lowest unemployment rate since 2000. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, North Carolina added 9,000 jobs this February alone. And thanks to lower rates for individuals and small businesses under the new code, North Carolinians are keeping more of their hard-earned money. And as Congressman WILSON points out, it is their money, not the government's money.

This year, married couples in the Fifth District who take the new standard deduction could receive a tax cut to the tune of \$1,834. For the over 52,000 taxpayers of the Fifth District who have small business income, these tax savings are not crumbs, as my colleagues on the other side of the aisle falsely assert. A restaurant owner in Mount Airy recently told me that allowing immediate capital expensing under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act empowered her to purchase a new \$20,000 piece of equipment for her business.

You spoke of the Business Roundtable. The Business Roundtable reports that 68 percent of business leaders similarly expect their capital spending in the next 6 months to be at its highest in 15 years. This increased purchasing power for the backbone of our economy is evidence that progrowth tax cuts work.

Continued growth is also expected by the Congressional Budget Office. The CBO estimates, for every one-tenth percent increase in GDP, nearly \$270 billion is added to revenue over 10 years. After years of malaise under the Obama administration, even modest increases in GDP growth caused by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will substantially contribute to a leveling off of the deficit. And for the first time since 2008, the CBO's budget and economic outlook revised its upward economic potential for 2018. Under current conditions, it notes that 3.5 percent growth is possible.

In further good news, Fifth District businesses share this optimism and are investing more in their employees and communities. Just last week, as part of its initiative to invest in community health with its tax savings, BlueCross and BlueShield of North Carolina gave \$1 million to Winston-Salem State University's nursing school. North Caro-

lina is projected to have the second largest nurse shortage in the Nation. This investment will develop the Fifth District's medical workforce and increase access to high-quality healthcare, especially in rural areas.

This is just one of the many examples that illustrates how philanthropy has fostered and communities are developed when the government scales back.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that House Republicans kept our promise to bring about more jobs, fairer taxes, and bigger paychecks for hardworking Americans; but I am more proud of the hardworking men and women in the Fifth District who are seizing the opportunities unleashed by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to create wealth and serve their communities.

Again, I thank Congressman WILSON for his leadership on this Special Order and for allowing us to correct the record that has been distorted about this bill and bring to the American people the facts about this wonderful Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairwoman VIRGINIA FOXX for her comments. And I thank her, as an educator, for educating the American people and bringing to the attention of the American people the real facts of the benefits of the tax cuts.

Congress today appreciates that Americans should keep their hard-earned tax dollars, and it is shocking to hear the other side of the aisle say that they would repeal the tax cuts if they get a majority in the House come November, resulting in tax increases on American families, destroying jobs. Sadly, I suspect a lot of families and businesses being highlighted today will be shocked—but maybe not so shocked—to hear that Democrats are campaigning on raising taxes, destroying jobs.

I sincerely hope that Americans across the country know that Republicans will continue to do all that we can to our ability to increase take-home pay to families, reduce the tax burdens on seniors, and create more efficient and effective government that works for you and provides opportunities for the young people of America.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REFORMING U.S. CANNABIS POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am here this evening to emphasize the importance of reforming our Nation's policies concerning cannabis. This issue has grown to be increasingly bipartisan over the years, yet some in this administration have largely ignored the rising public support for legal, State-regulated cannabis.

□ 2030

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ), a distinguished colleague from the panhandle.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from the Sunshine State of Florida for yielding, and I am so grateful that we have been able to find some areas of common ground in this Congress on the issue of cannabis reform.

I am very proud, Mr. Speaker, to announce that, in the coming days, I will be joining the Judiciary chairman, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), in introducing legislation that enjoys support from across the ideological spectrum, and it will do several important things:

First, it will increase the number of people who are growing medical-grade cannabis for research purposes.

Second, it will end the gag rule at the VA that precludes physicians from being able to consult and speak with their patients about the laws in their particular States.

Third, it will create a safe harbor so that some of the finest medical institutions and universities in this great country will be able to research and partner with private sector entities to determine the potential that medical cannabis can have to improve people's quality of life.

And finally, this legislation will end the prohibition from having commercial, for-profit entities working in concert, in collaboration with some of those very universities and medical institutions.

So my hope is that by focussing first on the issues that bring us together, we will be able to advance legislation to democratize medical cannabis research, and that, ultimately, can unlock cures and unlock potential for a generation of Americans that shouldn't be lied to by their government about the potential health benefits of cannabis.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership, his honesty, and his sincerity on this issue, and I am proud to say that I have cosponsored this legislation.

Now I will yield to one of the original cosponsors of Mr. GAETZ's legislation and one of the great leaders in this institution on this issue for many years, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), who has been educating colleagues and the American public on